



## **Environmental Education Indiana Department of Environmental Management**

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This summary offers information concerning IDEM's review of current and future environmental education efforts. The information includes highlights from the major activities and discussions held regarding the agency's efforts. For the purpose of this summary, environmental education is defined as non-regulatory based outreach to children pre K-12 and limited adult audiences. It should be noted that environmental education is not designed to eliminate the need for regulation. However, it costs much less to teach people how to prevent environmental problems than it does to clean up those problems.



IDEM is working to develop in-house programs which focus on providing educators with tools for teaching environmental education. Program development must include providing additional teacher in-service programs and outreach. IDEM is putting staff in place to focus solely on providing educator and student programs designed to help bring environmental science into the classroom. Due to the nature of environmental education work, a coordinator and centralized location was given to Environmental Education for IDEM. Recently, IDEM's Office of Planning and Assessment was chosen to lead the agency in our environmental education efforts. Two additional staff will be hired to lead these efforts. These individuals, working with the office director, will be responsible for developing goals for IDEM's environmental education efforts and completing a multi-year work plan.

Working with Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Department of Education as well as other Indiana educators, IDEM will be working to develop classroom environmental education kits for classrooms, provide outdoor lab usage ideas and look into additional environmental education ideas.

IDEM currently has air curriculum and has been providing outreach and in-service opportunities. The Office of Air Management has trained more than 200 teachers using an environmental education grant through US EPA Region 5. IDEM will be continuing with the development of the Project LEAP curriculum. The original program proposal was to create four modules (air, water, land and ecosystem). The curriculum will be developed in conjunction with other programs and provide opportunities for educators to comment during the development. The current layout of the curriculum provides educators with Indiana-specific materials which are pollution oriented, easy to understand, does not require formal training to institute in the classroom and free to Indiana educators. The LEAP curriculum also includes hands-on environmental indicator projects which serve to teach students the basic concepts of scientific investigation while also collecting data about baseline environmental indicators.

In addition to the Project LEAP program, IDEM has a number of educational opportunities for children and teachers to include: mercury, lead, integrated pest management, recycling, source reduction and a variety of other activities. Many of our efforts can be found on our web site at: [www.state.in.us/idem/kids](http://www.state.in.us/idem/kids) as well as the Project LEAP site [www.state.in.us/idem/leap/index](http://www.state.in.us/idem/leap/index).